

VZCZCXRO2759
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #2144/01 3341306
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 301306Z NOV 09
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6795
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//
RHMFIUU/CMC WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7967
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4934
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4784
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6272
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 4703
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3307

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 JERUSALEM 002144

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (11/30):
"A Holiday With No Deals" Reflects Lack of Progress on Many Fronts

Due to the Eid Al Adha holiday weekend, today's media reaction covers Palestinian newspapers published Friday, November 27, stories reported via online Palestinian media outlets, and today's edition of independent, Al Ayyam, the only Palestinian daily to publish today. Post's regular media reaction will return tomorrow, Tuesday, December 1.

Main Stories:

Friday, November 27

All three dailies run front page stories detailing Palestinian leadership's demands for a full cessation of settlement activities, Israel's commitment to the 4th of June borders, and increased pressure from the U.S. on Israel to completely halt settlement construction in order to resume peace process negotiations.

The dailies report at length on the speech given Thursday by Yasser Abed Rabbo, the secretary general of the PLO Executive Committee, in which he characterized Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's temporary moratorium on settlement expansion a "political manoeuvre" which did not include anything new and called on the United States to intensify its efforts towards achieving a full cessation of settlement activities without exceptions and obtaining commitments from both the Palestinian and Israeli sides to the 4th of June 1967 borders. Abed Rabbo opined that the U.S. administration is capable of advancing a reliable peace process which everyone can trust, Palestinians, Arabs, and all entities wishing to see an end to this conflict, and an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories. He reaffirmed the PA's desire that Senator Mitchell continue his efforts to promote a peace process that is

capable of achieving the two-state solution on the basis of the 4th of June borders.

Dailies quote a statement by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Israeli government's decision "could contribute to some kind of a breakthrough if followed by other measures including the full cessation of settlement activities." Dailies also report that the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Naser Joudeh, considered Israel's decision to freeze settlement activities in the West Bank for ten months "insufficient" and stressed the importance of completely halting all settlement activities including in East Jerusalem.

The dailies report that Israeli leadership believes that through its temporary settlement freeze it has done its part to resume peace negotiations. When asked about Palestinian leadership's rejection of the settlement freeze, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman said, "Palestinians' concerns should be the least of our worries. What we should care about are our friends in the world... we talked with them and most of them told us: help us to help you...The ball is now in the Palestinian court." Citing a story in the Israeli Yediot Ahranot newspaper, the dailies report that Netanyahu refused a request by the U.S. to consider transferring more control in West Bank to PA security forces.

Palestinian Authority official daily Al Hayat Al Jadida front page a story entitled "Mitchell: We Object to Any Pre-Emptive Action in Jerusalem That Might Affect the Negotiations." The article quotes Senator Mitchell that President Obama has said repeatedly "we

JERUSALEM 00002144 002 OF 004

believe that the two-state solution of the conflict is the best means towards achieving the joint objective of Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace and security...this is a question of U.S. national security interest and there is an urgent need for a solution." The daily reports Mitchell reiterated that U.S. policy towards settlements remains unaffected and unchanged that "America does not accept the legitimacy of the Israeli settlements" and that "the status of Jerusalem and all final status issues should be resolved by the relevant parties through negotiations."

Reporting on President Abbas' visit to Chile, the dailies quote Abbas saying that Netanyahu "chose occupation over peace." Abbas added that "faced with this Israeli position, we are consulting with our Arab brothers, with the Latin American, African, European, and Asian countries and groups, and in the future with the American administration regarding the possibility of going to the UN Security Council with the aim of demarcating the borders of the state of Palestine on the 4th of June 1967 borders with its capital East Jerusalem." Abbas stated that "our goal...is an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with its capital East Jerusalem that lives side by side with Israel in peace and security...after 61 years since the Nakbah, the time has come for the Palestinian people to live in peace and security in its independent and sovereign state."

Saturday, November 28

Independent news outlet Ma'an reported on Abbas' visit to Venezuela during which he dismissed Israel's settlement freeze as "meaningless" and that there would be no peace talks without a full freeze. Abbas was accompanied by PLO chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, who was quoted saying "Without a settlement freeze, there can be no credible negotiations and no credible peace process. Settlements are not only illegal under international law. They pose the greatest threat to the two-state solution and run counter to the formula of 'land for peace' on which the entire Middle East peace process is built. And without East Jerusalem as its capital, there can be no viable Palestinian state...Time is running out for the two-state solution. While hopes for peace based on the two-state solution continue to fade, Palestinian demands for the restoration of our basic rights and freedoms will not."

Sunday, November 29

Ma'an reports that President Abbas concluded his trip to Latin America with a visit to Venezuela during which he signed a number of agreements with President Chavez to promote bilateral relations including initiatives to increase trade between Venezuela and the Palestinian territories and student exchange programs. According to the reports, Chavez emphasized that the agreements were signed between the State of Palestine, recognized as a sovereign state, and Caracas. Chavez stated, "Venezuela is Palestine; Palestine is Venezuela, we have a common struggle..."We should devote the entire force of our hearts and souls towards the creation of a Palestinian state."

Ma'an reports on Prime Minister Fayyad's meeting with Costa Rican President Oscar Arias in Bethlehem during which Fayyad urged the international community to do more to stop Israel's settlement enterprise and said that the PA would undertake efforts to declare a Palestinian state. President Arias urged the resumption of peace

JERUSALEM 00002144 003 OF 004

negotiations as soon as possible and stated his support for the Ramallah government.

Ma'an reports that according to Israel's State Attorney's Office, Israel will release 980 Palestinians in exchange for Shalit. According to the story, Hamas will select 450 names and Israel will choose the rest "as a gesture to the Palestinian people" in a second stage of the deal. Citing Al-Jazeera, the article reports that "negotiations will be completed in Gaza, and that Hamas wants to clarify certain safeguards required to complete the deal."

Ma'an reports on protests in Jerusalem on Saturday by secular Israelis against the recent ultra-Orthodox Jewish campaign to shut down businesses working on the Jewish Sabbath in the city. According to the story, secular Israelis waved Israeli flags and held banners proclaiming "We are sick of [religious] coercion." The story notes that the rally comes after weeks of ultra-Orthodox Jewish protests, which often turned violent, against the American company Intel's Sabbath office hours and Jerusalem Municipality's decision to allow a parking lot near the Old City to function on the Jewish Sabbath.

Monday, November 30

Independent daily Al Ayyam's main headline story reports on Abbas' trip to Venezuela and the PA intent to approach the UN Security Council on the issue of establishing a Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 borders. Abbas stated that the PA is currently discussing the proposal with Arab, Latin American, African, Asian and European states and plans to approach the United States about it soon.

Al Ayyam front pages, below the fold, the news that Special Envoy Mitchell will continue to serve as the U.S. Special Envoy on Middle East peace, that he plans to travel to the area in the near future, and he hopes that a solution to the question of "borders" can be reached soon.

Al Ayyam headlines a center article reporting that captured Israeli prisoner Shalit will be transferred to Egypt in the coming days in preparation for the anticipated Hamas-Israel prisoner exchange deal.

BLOCK QUOTES:

Samih Shbib opines in independent daily Al-Ayyam (11/27) under the headline "Settlement Speech," "We can consider this speech...a settlement speech...not a speech on halting settlement activities... this is a speech to legitimize settlements, to make settlements a given part of political life; and, not an issue that requires negotiations to stop." In Shbib's opinion, Netanyahu excluded Jerusalem from the settlement freeze because it is Israel's "eternal unified capital," and therefore not considered a final status issue.

Rajab Abu Seryeh writes in Al-Ayyam (11/27) under the headline "A Holiday With No Deals" that "the purpose of the announcement [10-month settlement moratorium] is to obstruct the Palestinian diplomatic attack [seeking UN recognition of Palestinian state]." According to Abu Seryeh, "The American Administration needs Israel's settlement freeze announcement to justify its contradictory position towards the PA proposed resolution [UN recognition of

JERUSALEM 00002144 004 OF 004

Palestine]...Israel also needs it in order to defend itself at the UN when discussing the PA-proposed resolution." Abu Seryeh seemed to blame Secretary Clinton for U.S. support of Israeli settlement policy saying, "Although George Mitchell has stated that Israel's decision does not rise to the level of a complete halt of settlements, the U.S. Secretary of State has welcomed the Israeli decision."

MARCHESE